

Case 3376

***Lithocolletis oxyacanthae* Frey, 1855 (currently *Phyllonorycter oxyacanthae*; Insecta, Lepidoptera): proposed conservation of the specific name by giving it precedence over *Lithocolletis pomonella* Zeller, 1846**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Article 23.9.3 of the Code, is to conserve the widely used specific name *Phyllonorycter oxyacanthae* (Frey, 1855) for a common European leaf miner moth (family GRACILLARIIDAE) by giving it precedence over *Phyllonorycter pomonella* (Zeller, 1846), which has recently been shown by Triberti (2007) to be its senior synonym. A change in the application of the name would cause considerable confusion as the name *P. pomonella* has been commonly applied to other species.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Lepidoptera; GRACILLARIIDAE; *Phyllonorycter*; *Phyllonorycter oxyacanthae*; *Phyllonorycter pomonella*; leaf miner moth; Europe.

1. The name *Lithocolletis oxyacanthae* was established by Frey, 1855 (pp. 606–608) for a widespread European species whose larva is a leaf miner of *Crataegus* spp. (hawthorn) and a few other genera of ROSACEAE. The name of this species has been used consistently since the original description.

2. The name *Lithocolletis pomonella* Zeller, 1846 (p. 201) was established for a species collected on the wing. The author mentioned *Crataegus*, *Pyrus* and *Prunus* as possible host plants, occurring in the collecting site. Under this name, Zeller also described two ‘variants’ (*b* and *c*). Subsequently *Lithocolletis pomonella* has been reported as a synonym of *Lithocolletis sorbi* Frey, 1855 (Herrich-Schäffer, 1855; Staudinger & Rebel, 1901; Meyrick, 1912) or *Lithocolletis spinicolella* Zeller, 1846 (Stainton, 1854; Frey, 1856; Heinemann & Wocke, 1877; Bankes, 1899). From the beginning of the twentieth century it ceased to be cited (see Spuler, 1910; Caradja, 1920; Petersen, 1927; Meyrick, 1928; Pierce & Metcalfe, 1935; Mariani, 1940–41; Jacobs, 1945). Benander (1944) used the name *Lithocolletis pomonella* for *Lithocolletis spinicolella* and was followed by Lhomme (1963), Bradley et al. (1969), Bradley (1972), Leraut (1980, 1997), Kuznetsov (1981), Huemer (1988), Vives Moreno (1994) and Gregor & Patocka (2001). This misidentification was corrected by Karsholt (1996). In 1963 an unknown species mining the leaves of cultivated *Malus* was found by Ciampolini (1967) in Northern Italy, and identified by Hering (1966) as *Lithocolletis pomonella* (Zeller, 1846). However, this was a misidentification of a new species subsequently described as *Phyllonorycter hostis* Triberti, 2007. It is unclear why this name was used by Hering as he had never seen the types of *Lithocolletis pomonella* Zeller, 1846 (see Hering, 1966) and *Malus* is not mentioned in Zeller’s

description as a possible host plant. In Italy this new species has been referred to by the name *pomonella* in the applied entomological literature for twenty years: Ciampolini (1967), Baumgärtner et al. (1981), Süss & Ciampolini (1986). Later, it was corrected by Deschka in Ciampolini et al. (1988) and simply named *Phyllonorycter* 'sp.'.

3. A study of the type material of *Lithocolletis pomonella* revealed that this species is a senior synonym of *L. oxyacanthae* and consequently the name *Lithocolletis pomonella* should take priority. 'Variants' *b* and *c* correspond to *Lithocolletis oxyacanthae* Frey, 1855 and *Lithocolletis cerasicolella* Herrich-Schäffer, 1855 respectively (Triberti, 2007).

4. The name *pomonella* has also been incorrectly used in many publications where it is applied to various species. In the last fifty years, it has been used for *spinicolella*, a species feeding on *Prunus spinosa* and *P. domestica*, and for a new species mining *Malus* subsequently described as *Phyllonorycter hostis* (Triberti, 2007), whereas *oxyacanthae* feeds on *Crataegus*, *Pyrus*, *Sorbus* and *Cydonia*. Therefore, if the name *pomonella* were given precedence over *oxyacanthae*, it would cause considerable confusion in both taxonomy and agriculture.

5. This application is submitted to coincide as closely as possible with the publication of Triberti (2007) to avoid usage of *Lithocolletis pomonella* Zeller, 1846 as the senior synonym of *Lithocolletis oxyacanthae* Frey, 1855. Comments in support of this application are published in BZN 64: 126–127.

6. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to give the name *oxyacanthae* Frey, 1855, as published in the binomen *Lithocolletis oxyacanthae*, precedence over the name *pomonella* Zeller, 1846, as published in the binomen *Lithocolletis pomonella*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *oxyacanthae* Frey, 1855, as published in the binomen *Lithocolletis oxyacanthae*, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name *pomonella* Zeller, 1846, as published in the binomen *Lithocolletis pomonella*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
 - (b) *pomonella* Zeller, 1846, as published in the binomen *Lithocolletis pomonella*, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the name *oxyacanthae* Frey, 1855, as published in the binomen *Lithocolletis oxyacanthae*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.

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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).